

Date:

False Agents?

THIS IS THE WAY Victor M. Carter, president of Republic Studios and official Los Angeles guide for Nikita Khrushchev now tells it:

He and the Soviet premier were riding through California's San Fernando Valley when Khrushchev suddenly blurted out:

"Your agents in Europe and the Middle East give us your code books and then we send false information back to you through your codes."

Mr. Carter, who speaks Russian, was startled. He asked Mr. Khrushchev to explain. The Soviet leader accommodated.

According to Mr. Carter, Khrushchev told him the Russians had broken a secret American code and had intercepted highly confidential messages having to do with our foreign policies. The Red boss also claimed coded messages were sent to the U. S. asking for money, which the Soviets later received.

* * *

To make this report on Khrushchev's revelations believable, it is necessary to construct the dictator's mood during that ride through San Fernando Valley. He had arrived in this country only a few days before with a chip on his shoulder. He had been particularly difficult in Washington and later in Manhattan.

His notion seemed to be that we Americans were scornful of his prestige and that his mission here was to convince us of his government's might. He had seemed obsessed with this in Washington.

He was in this same touchy, quarrelsome state of mind when he rode with Mr. Carter. His blurted out claim of having used our disloyal agents to Russian advantage, therefore, could be considered another effort on his part to prove Soviet cleverness. At least Mr. Carter took it that way.

Is this Carter story true? Despite the fine reputation of the movie maker, some have preferred not to believe it, or rather to discount it, because, later in his tour, Khrushchev became friendly and left here on what he called "okay" terms with the American people. Then, too, such a story, if generally accepted as true, could be embarrassing to certain people still active in public life.

But now we have no choice but to believe exactly what Mr. Carter said that Khrushchev did make such statements and in the circumstances which Mr. Carter described. The authority is our UN ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge who was in the car on the San Fernando Valley ride. Questioned on a TV program, Mr. Lodge at first refused

to comment. Then he was reminded that his silence could be taken as confirmation. To this, he said:

"I was in the car . . . and I'm sorry to say this is one of the things on which I cannot comment. It is against the best interests of the country to talk."

But would Mr. Lodge deny what Mr. Carter said? He would not. Then would Mr. Lodge confirm the Carter story? He declined to comment. Did this reluctance mean that Mr. Lodge could not deny the story? He refused to say. His questioners accepted, on the basis of the Ambassador's behavior, the Carter story. Mr. Lodge made no objection.

* * *

So we are compelled to believe that the Russian premier did boast here that certain of our agents abroad were treacherous and, while ostensibly working for us, actually were serving the Soviet Union. Was Khrushchev lying? Perhaps not even Mr. Lodge can answer that. But, regardless, it is a fantastic development and one that should stir up old memories.

We recall when there were men in Congress who, bravely and at great personal sacrifice, charged exactly what Khrushchev said and tried to prove it. Some of them were driven from public life. Others were so vilified and smeared that we came to hate them. Still others were abandoned by their political associates as "too controversial."

Harry Truman locked up the files to confront them. Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, refused to testify even though our agents abroad work under him. President Eisenhower issued a gag order, forbidding all government employees to talk to Congressional probers.

Now Kenneth Harn, a Los Angeles county supervisor, demands that Congress investigate what Mr. Khrushchev told Mr. Carter on the grounds that a threat could exist to the "security and safety of the United States."

It may be a little late for this. The barn door has been open for some time.

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT